|The Tower of London is the capital’s top tourist attraction. William the Conqueror began to build it as a fortress just after 1066. He wanted to impress and dominate the people of England. Other kings extended it and added other buildings. It served as a royal home, prison, an observatory, an execution place and a museum. Nowadays tourists can see there weapons, the Crown Jewels in the Jewel House , the prison (eg. Guy Fawkes or Rudolf Hess were imprisoned there). The Tower is guarded by so called Beefeaters who still wear the uniform of Tudor Times. Six ravens are kept in the Tower to protect the whole Kingdom. The legend says that the Kingdom will collapse when the ravens leave the Tower (therefore their wings are clipped and they keep some extra ones).

Next to the Tower you can find the Tower Bridge, the most famous bridge of London which opens in the middle to allow large ships to pass. Built in 1894, it takes 90 seconds to open. The City is the oldest part of London around St. Paul’s Cathedral. There are many banks (the most important is the Bank of England), insurance offices (Lloyds), the Stock Exchange and many offices.

The largest and best-known church of the City is the Cathedral – a masterpiece of Sir Christopher Wren. It was built after the Great Fire of London (1666) in Baroque style. It is known for its Whispering Gallery – standing on this Gallery you can clearly hear what is whispered on the opposite side 107 feet far from you. During the World War II is was badly damaged by bombs. Many important events have taken place there (eg. the funeral service of W. Churchill), famous people are burried there – Admiral Nelson, Sir C. Wren himself).

Not far from the Cathedral rises the Monument that commemorates the place where the Fire of London started.

Westminster/The City of Westminter: Royal Palaces, Abbey and the Government offices

The Houses of Parliament are the political centre of the United Kingdom, the home of British Parliament. They were rebuilt in Neo-Gothic style. 97.5 above the Parliament rises the clock tower – Big Ben is not the name of the tower but of the bell inside (named after one rather fat MP called Benjamin).

Whitehall is the street where the government offices are, Downing Street 10 is the official home of British Prime Minister.

Not far from the Houses of Parliament is Buckingham Palace, the London home of the kings and queens of Great Britain. Outside the Palace the ceremony of Changing the Guards takes place every day.

Westminster Abbey – almost all monarchs since the 11th century have been crowned there, famous people are buried there, including W. Shakespeare.

West End: Trafalgar Square – its name commemorates the victory of Admiral Lord Nelson over the French an Spanish (Napoleon) at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805). In the middle of the square is Nelson’s Column with a statue of Nelson at the top. The Column is surrounded by two fountains, other monuments of famous people and many pigeons. The famous National Gallery forms one side of the square. A short way from Trafalgar Square is Piccadily Circus with the statue of Eros.

The British Museum is the largest museum in the world. It houses the biggest collection of all kinds of animal and minerals and rocks. There is a collection of fine and applied arts of all countries, periods and styles – ancient Greece, Rome and the Orient, Egyptiona mummies, Middle Ages manuscripts…

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